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HAL BLOCK - COLUMBUS 'BAGEL KING' *90 and 'No plans to retire'*

By Mary Anne White

Hal Block is approaching his 90th birthday and still comes to work every day, working behind the counter and in the office running the company he founded in 1976, Block's Bagels and Deli.

A native New Yorker, Block was a traveling salesman working the Midwest selling "Cinderella dresses" and "Shirley Temple" clothing for young girls up to age 12. On weekends, he worked at a bagel shop.

Block, his wife Audrey, and their sons Steve and Alan moved to Columbus in the 1960s where they found a close-knit Jewish community. Block noted, "In New York, the Jewish community was spread out all over the place. Here, the community was gathered together."

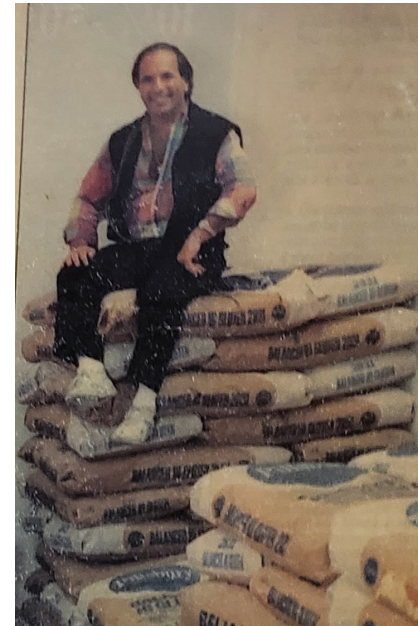
The Blocks soon discovered one thing that Co-



Hal Block

er. The store was successful so in 1980, they opened a production facility located at McNaughten Road and Main Street, near Reynoldsburg.

The Kellner Road store closed in 1987 and a new one opened at Hampton and Broad Street. "Audrey was well-known by patrons



Columbus 'Bagel King' sits on top sacks of flour in the 1990's

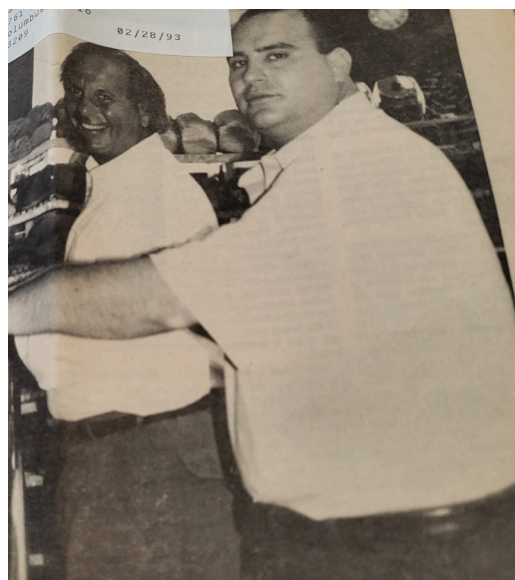
ning the business until his untimely death in 2022. The McNaughten store is now the only Block's Bagels and Deli location and today offers almost 30 varieties of bagels, challah and rye breads, deli sandwiches, and salads and more.

Hal continues to work

and a dedicated staff of employees who became like family," said Angie Stiehl, manager of the remaining McNaughten store. "My mom and dad worked here. I've worked with the Block family for 30 years; my husband worked here, and my son also works here now. Hal is like my second dad," Stiehl commented.

Stiehl continued, "Block's donates a lot of bagels and bakery items to any group that submits an organizational letter stating that those donated goods will not be sold."

Many of Block's employees are local high school students who appreciate getting work experience for the first time. They learn



Hal and son Steve made bagels together for many years

lumbus lacked was a good bagel! So in 1967 they opened a bagel shop on South Kellner Road in East Columbus.

Using recipes from one of Hal's uncles who ran a New York bakery, the Kellner Road store featured seven varieties of bagels. Lox and cream cheese were served from a reach-in cool-

at the East Broad Street location until she passed away 14 years ago," Block recalled. "For a while, we supplied Kroger stores with bagels, but it was a lot of extra work and you really couldn't make any money doing it, so we don't do that anymore."

Steve Block worked along with his father run-

every day. He energetically fills in whenever and wherever there's a need, whether it's behind the counter or in the office. After an occasional power nap he comes out recharged with energy and keeps busy until the store closes.

"All the shops were run by Hal, Audrey, Steve, extended family members,

what distinguishes good customer service and how that impacts repeat business. They meet long-time Block's bagel fans from across the country, who make a point of stopping in whenever they are in town. One gentleman who lives in Iowa always makes it a

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Block's Bagels today